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U.S. Representative Dwight Evans
The Committee on Ways and Means
“Members’ Day Hearing” Statement
Tuesday, June 4, 2019

Chairman Neal, Ranking Member Brady, I would like to thank you for having this opportunity for our Members to discuss priorities that will truly level the playing field and create opportunities for the people across this country.

I come from Philadelphia, which is home to some of the best health facilities in the country.

Just to name a few - we have Temple University Hospital, University of Pennsylvania Hospital, Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, Einstein Medical Center, and Jefferson University Hospital. The list goes on, but I will stop there in the interest of time.

This means we are also home to many talented and ambitious health professionals who go to work every day, eager to improve the lives of patients and their families.

It is our job to not only create more opportunities for them to do that, but to *excel* at it.

This is why the Health Profession Opportunity Grants program – or HPOGs – are so important.

HPOGs provide Temporary Assistance for Needy Families recipients and other low-income individuals with education and training for well-paying jobs in the healthcare industry that are in high demand or that are experiencing a workforce shortage.

Initial demonstrations of the program have proven that HPOGs can be an effective tool in achieving many of our goals.

They increase the likelihood that people will enter the health professions - which is critical given the shortage of qualified workers in many communities, including Philadelphia.

They also help diversify the health professions, which can lead to reducing disparities in health outcomes.

And HPOGs can assist low-income parents and other individuals in getting better jobs and moving up the career ladder, which is key to reducing poverty.

HPOGs are different from other career training programs in a number of ways.

The program incorporates a career-pathways approach that provides training not just for a job, but sets participants on a path toward upward mobility and economic security.

It also includes extensive supportive services such as case managers, career counselors, academic support, child care, transportation, and stipends that take into account the reality of the obstacles people face in climbing the ladder, and helps them succeed and prepare for the future.

The mentorship and career coaching components of the program are especially critical in helping individuals overcome their barriers.

I have always been an outspoken supporter of mentoring. Not all of us grow up in the same communities, come from the same backgrounds, and are taught the same things through our upbringing.

Mentoring is key to bridging the gaps we have in and across our communities, strengthening bonds, and ensuring that people can grow to reach their full potential, no matter where they come from.

This is why I am working on legislation to build on our HPOG success with mentoring, and to make sure that all HPOGs include this critical component.

This legislation will ensure that mentoring is there when program participants need it - from the first day they apply, through their training, and on the job.

This is an important tool in the toolbox that can truly play a key role in leveling the playing field and helping our communities thrive.

It is my hope that the Committee will move forward to expand and strengthen HPOGs, and build on their success.

Thank you - I yield back the balance of my time.